



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
TENNESSEE COUNCIL FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
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BILL HASLAM
Governor

RAQUEL HATTER, MSW, Ed.D.
Commissioner

TCDDHH COUNCIL MEETING
League for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
Friday, August 12, 2011

Members Present: Thom Roberts, Lordy Smith, Summer Chappell, Dana Hughes(Chair), Paulette Melton (Vice-Chair), Lygia Williams, Terry Smith, Margie Ulrich, Steve Farmer (for Alan Mealka), Deborah Harris, and Michael Friedman.

Members Not Present: Vacant Position

Call to Order

At approximately 9:05 a.m. the meeting was called to order.

Review of Minutes

The Council members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. Being confirmed, the Council was then asked to approve these minutes. If approved, minutes stand as the official record of the previous meeting on May 20, 2011.

- ✓ Individual Action: Motion made by Paulette Melton and seconded by Summer Chappell for the minutes to stand as the official record of the previous meeting on May 20, 2011.
- ✓ Member Action: The Council voted verbally with all ayes, no nays.
Motion Carried.

DRS Report

Terry Smith, Interim Asst. Commissioner

- Vocational Rehabilitation has undergone many changes in the past couple of months. Interviews are being conducted and we should have a new Assistant Commissioner by November.
- We are creating an office of Learning and Program Management that will take over all training functions for all of the divisions in Human Services. That will include Family Assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation, and everybody else. So we will have one centralized training unit.
- The monitoring responsibility for all contracts is being moved to the office of Inspector General so there will be a staff person in that unit who will be responsible for monitoring contracts for Rehabilitation Services.
- We're putting in our new management information system and this has been a major, major endeavor. This is the system that the counselors use to track all the caseload information. We're going to as close to a paperless system as we can and it's going to be very, very good.

Lana Newton, Deaf-Blind Services

- The Tennessee Organization of the Deaf-Blind, a consumer group, has grown and started another chapter in Chattanooga now and it's growing steadily and staying very active.
- We're talking about an adult Deaf-Blind mentoring group to start working with Deaf-Blind children who need assistance learning sign language and braille and a lot of tactile signing.
- We just recently got the first two interveners, a new position which is like a new certification program. Intervenors work with Deaf-Blind students in the school system. There are only about 20 in the whole country right now. Tennessee just had their first two get their degrees. Tennessee is in the top right now in that field because it's growing.

Council Member Reports

- **Deborah Harris** –
 - After two years and much hard work, the Memphis City School Foundation has a signed contract with the Deaf Family Literacy Academy. The only other state that has this program is Florida. It is our hope that this is a successful program and that it will be granted to other parts of the state. The kick-off publicity event will be in September.
- **Lygia Williams** –
 - The Department of Mental Health was just awarded a new grant for suicide prevention in the amount of \$1.5 million. This will be the third grant awarded to us. The grant is the result of Senator Smith having lost his son to suicide. It is also a great opportunity to put a plug in when

considering how to use the funds to be sure we don't forget the Deaf and Hard of hearing.

- **Summer Chappell** –
 - TRID has finalized the proposed by-laws in an effort to comply with IRS specifications in order to qualify for funds.
 - TRID's annual conference will be held in Knoxville next year.
 - The National RID office has a new President, Brenda Walker Prudham, and is currently looking for a new Executive Director.
- **Lordy Smith** –
 - MCBDA, Inc. (Memphis Chapter, Black Deaf Advocates) held their annual 4th of July picnic on July 2nd. Approximately 30 – 35 people attended. Everyone had a great time.
 - Our annual Labor Day Picnic is scheduled for September 2nd. Please join us at the Lutheran Church for the Deaf.
 - The Memphis Chapter of Black Deaf Advocates was represented at this year's meeting in Charlotte, NC.
 - Memphis Chapter of Black Deaf Advocates is organizing a workshop and will host that in the near future.
- **Michael Friedman** –
 - My daughter graduated and we traveled to Knoxville for the graduation ceremony.
 - We're setting up a Deaf community center so the Deaf will have a place they can come and use for activities, events, and workshops.
- **Paulette Melton** –
 - West Tennessee has been busy the whole summer getting acclimated to the new computer system.
- **Margie Ulrich** –
 - I see a lot of people that come in and don't know that services are available due to the "alphabet soup". I would like to see the council comprise a list of all services available that isn't acronyms.
- **Steve Farmer** –
 - The Tennessee School for the Deaf has been very busy this summer. May 19th was graduation. We had 15 students graduating and 100% placements of the third year students.
 - Our Homecoming is scheduled for September 24th. Please join us.
- **Dana Hughes** –
 - I worked with the American Association of the Deaf-Blind of Middleton, Kentucky as a Coordinator for SSP activities during their national conference.
 - I have been selected as the President of TAD and as a result, I will no longer be the Chair of this Council. My first Board meeting with TAD will be in Memphis on October 22.

Executive Director's Report

June

- 3 Spoke at Mega Conference regarding hard of hearing issues
- 8 EARS Meeting
- 21 FEMA/TEMA Meeting

July

- 1 Mental Health & Deaf Community Meeting
- 7&8 TAD Conference in Cool Springs
- 9 Deaf Tennessee Expo

- 15 TSPN public awareness event at Greer Stadium
- 19 CARE Project workshop
- 20 EARS Meeting
- 26 Jackson Center for Independent Living “Second 4th of July”.

August

- 2 Workshop regarding hearing loss for Bridges
- 9 Bill Rice Ranch Partnership Banquet

Other activities include, but not limited to, providing assistance in obtaining hearing aids, providing advocacy, and serving on the Southeast Regional Institute on Deafness (SERID) Board of Directors.

Center Director Reports

➤ **CCDHH – Jessica Harrison** -

- Becky Allen, with DLAC, is continuing to come to the office monthly to meet with people who may have need of her services. The meetings can be held in person or by calling CCDHH’s VP while Becky is in the office. CCDHH provides interpretation for these meetings. We are seeing more and more people take advantage of this service. We are also facilitating meetings with the DLAC attorney via the videophone and a staff interpreter. We continue to provide the community with information and handouts about DLAC and the ADA in regards to effective communication.
- CCDHH is also promoting the free in-service trainings that we provide. This quarter we have been working with several VR offices, Job Centers, a Mental Health Crisis Call Center, a nursing home, an advanced care medical facility and a senior citizen’s health fair.

➤ **KCD – Terry Osborne** -

- KCD, TSD and the Knox County Health Department sponsored an Emergency Preparedness workshop last June held at TSD in the Old Gym. Approximately 40 people attended the workshop. Another session will be offered during the fall. Date is TBA.
- The 8th annual Golfing with the Deaf (GWTD) event will be held September 23rd at Centennial Golf Course in Oak Ridge, TN. Hosted by TDGA and KCD, this event raises money to help fund our deaf-blind voucher program. For more information visit www.tenndga.org.
- The 3rd annual Rummage Sale will be held at KCD on Oct 1st. THD (Tennessee Hillbilly Deaf) will coordinate the sale and also host their monthly picnic at the same time. KCD is now accepting items to sell and donations. Proceeds go to the Compassion Fund to help deaf families in need during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season.

➤ **JCIL – Amy Cone** -

- JCIL had a Job Club on May 23rd with VR counselors and VR clients who are actively pursuing employment. We had representatives from VR, STAR Center, and the Career Center

who helped with resumes, job readiness skills and mock interviews.

- Roger Boeving from DLAC came and discussed accessible voting booths and how to make it easier for Deaf individuals to vote.

➤ **Bridges – Sallie Hussey-**

- With two new grants to support it, our Literacy Project kicks off this fall in the Youth Center. We are thrilled to hire a part-time Literacy Coordinator and a full-time Youth Center assistant, both to start in September. Because we expect the Youth Center to grow both in numbers and in scope, the program hopes to increase its volunteers, funding, and with more staff in the next year.
- Our interpreting program was up 31% from last year. Eric and his staff focused on new contracts, managing the interpreting program extremely well, making sure the business customers understood how interpreting services work, and working diligently to meet the Deaf community's needs. Next year the interpreting program will focus on streamlining the online billing process and updating a formal interpreter evaluation process.

➤ **Deaf Connect – Teresa Wilson -**

- Deaf Connect is still in the transitional process with our upgrades but we've seen a lot of progress.
- Deaf Connect has received requests from the Mississippi School System and two other businesses for sign language classes. We are setting up four classes outside our center.
- The center is trying to increase the skill level of interpreters by offering workshops and CEU's. Many individuals are going to Mississippi to become certified there.

➤ **PFCA – Darwin Ayscue –**

- About 20 months ago our program was restructured because of economic reasons. Because of Linda Lawson's dedication and just digging in deep, we have turned that program around. We're really excited to share that with you. This spring we had the highest revenue we've ever had.
- We're getting together with our freelance interpreters every three or four months to discuss administrative issues, interpreter concerns, etc. as we are using their services now more than ever.

Committee Reports

- **Communication Committee**, Summer Chappell – While at RID, I spoke with Melvin Walker who is on the board for Alabama's licensure issues. I am continuing to work on the licensure for the State of Tennessee.
- **Legislative Committee**, Dana Hughes – I will be working on trying to get the Department of Safety to change the laws regarding Deaf truck drivers.
- **Education Committee**, Deborah Harris – This week when we woke up and picked up our papers on Tuesday morning, the headline read "ruling affirms school merger." There is a new state law which is known as the Norris-Todd law which is aimed at guiding the merger of the Memphis City Schools and Shelby County Schools with the appointment of a 21-member transition committee. The Transition committee has to make certain that the consolidation is completed in

time for the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year. We've got 150,000 students between those two systems.

- **Social Welfare**, Lygia Williams – We are looking at ways to assess mental health needs of the Deaf. One option is to create a survey similar to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). We will also check with Gallaudet to see if they have a survey that they currently use.

Rusty Lawrence – Urban Housing Solutions

Urban Housing Solutions has developed the first residential community for Deaf adults of all ages in the Southeast states. It is located in a vibrant section of East Nashville where most housing has been renovated. We have emphasized sight lines, light, visual alerts, connections for video phones, and a large community space which we hope will become a hub of activity for the Deaf community. There are 20 apartments and only 6 are occupied at the moment. We are looking for people who would like to live in a Deaf community. It is income based and many of the utilities are included.

Announcements

Southeastern Institute on Deafness (SEIRD) is an annual conference. This year the conference is hosted by Montgomery, Alabama. Next year it will be hosted by Tennessee. It will be housed in Chattanooga, Tennessee and we will be recruiting friendly people to help us with this conference. Please let Thom Roberts know if you are interested in being involved. Thom may be reached at (615) 313-4896.

Old Business/New Business

New:

- Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the council:
 - Dana Hughes nominated Lordy Smith for Chair. Lordy accepted the nomination. Council voted and Lordy was voted in as the new Chair.
 - Summer Chappell nominated Paulette Melton for Vice Chair. Paulette accepted the nomination. Council voted and Paulette will continue as the Vice Chair.
- Margie Ulrich made a motion to pass the State Legislative Report. Summer Chappell seconded the motion. The council voted to pass the State Legislative Report and to submit it to the Legislature.

Old:

- Nominations for a council member to fill the vacancy created by Dana's appointment as TAD President will be complete once we have one more nomination from TAD. The nominees will then be sent to the Governor for selection.
- The next council meeting is set for the following date:
 - November 4, 2011

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned by Chairman, Dana Hughes at 12:12 P.M.